CHAPTER THREE
Nuclear Missiles

The fact of nuclear missiles was clearly described to us — if we did not have our minds closed to God.

A Flying Scroll

Zech 5:1-4 Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a flying scroll! And he said to me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits, and its breadth ten cubits." Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land; for every one who steals shall be cut off henceforth according to it, and every one who swears falsely shall be cut off henceforth according to it. I will send it forth, says the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by my name; and it shall abide in his house and consume it, both timber and stones."

Time and again we were warned. Ten by twenty cubits, eighteen by thirty-six feet, are roughly the size of a nuclear missile.

Nuclear Missiles

Joel 2:1-11

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.

Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but after them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them.

Their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses they run. As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle.

Before them peoples are in anguish, all faces grow pale.

Like warriors they charge, like soldiers they scale the wall. They march each on his way, they do not swerve from their paths. They do not jostle one another, each marches in his path; they burst through the weapons and are not halted. They leap upon the city, they run upon the walls; they climb up into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief.

The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his host is exceedingly great; he that executes his word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it?

I reserved discussion of this passage to this chapter because of its technical complexity. It has received extraordinary attention from biblical scholars and students through the centuries. As I stated earlier, prior to the year 1960 correct recognition of this passage would have been impossible, simply because the reality did not then exist. As with the *Abomination of Desolation* mankind could not penetrate the words of the prophecies. Only now, with world circumstances, and with technological developments, are we able to discern the significance of these descriptions.

Through the generations this passage has been invariably understood as a description of locusts and the destruction they bring. This view was conditioned by verse 4 in Chapter 1. This verse, and that of 2:25, are the only places in Joel where the word *locust* occurs.

Why did Joel use the word *locusts* if the descriptions are of modern missiles?

Would the passage have made sense to the ancients if familiar imagery had not been used? Would the descriptions be nonsense unless cast in a reasonable context? If the passage did not have a rational setting would it have been ignored by the ancients and, hence, neglected, lost, or rejected? While the descriptions are vivid, a context fitting to the thought of the ancients was necessary.

The same conditions held for all following generations. A vehicle suitable to the thought of the ages was necessary to hold sense to the passage.

How could Joel use the imagery of locusts? What parallels exist with modern missiles?

1. They are militant in purpose.
2. They fly.
3. They come in swarms.
4. They bring widespread destruction.
5. Nothing can halt them.

In order to draw out the parallels, to demonstrate that the imagery of locusts is inadequate to these descriptions, and to show that they are a remarkable description of modern nuclear missiles I shall provide a list which illustrates the points. Quotations for the traditional view are from J. A. Thompson and N. F. Langford in *The Interpreters Bible*, Vol VI, *The Book of Joel*.

I offer each phrase in sequence from Joel, the traditional view next (a), and the revelation view last (b).

#1:
a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness
a. The plague of locusts in Egypt darkened the land, Exod 10:15.
b. Refer to earlier discussion of the entire planet covered by clouds and thick darkness from nuclear debris lifted into the atmosphere.

#2:
there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people
a. A modern interpretation states "the whole face of the mountain was black with them." Use of *people* understood as poetic imagery rather than use of a simple word to specify *locusts*.
[The Hebrew word *am* = a people (as a congregated unit), (collectively) troops or attendants is used instead of the word *arbeh* = locust.]
b. Great and powerful troops, indeed, are nuclear missiles.

#3:
their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations
a. "The unparalleled character of the plague . . . expressed in words reminiscent of . . . Exod 10:14."
b. Never again will the world experience the awesome calamity of nuclear weaponry.

#4:
Fire devours before them
a. Literal fire denied. Metaphor for rapid brush fire which strips everything.
b. Nuclear warheads bring devastating fire for complete destruction.

#5:
behind them a flame burns
a. No explanation from suggestion of locusts.
c. Easily explained by rocket flames that propel missiles into the sky.

#6:
The land is like the garden of Eden before them
a. Before locusts come everything is rich and bountiful.
b. Before missiles come everything is rich and bountiful.

#7:
but after them a desolate wilderness
a. Locusts strip everything naked, to ruin the land.
b. Nuclear missiles strip everything from the face of the land.

#8:
nothing escapes them
a. Literally true of all green things which stand in their path.
b. Literally true for all things which stand in their path, green or otherwise.

#9:
Their appearance is like the appearance of horses
a. Note the nonsense: "The resemblance of the locust, particularly its head, to a miniature horse has induced a German name, Heupferd, and Italian cavaletta." One could better liken a deer to a horse. The German and Italian words derive from the tradition of the Joel imagery, not vise versa.
b. I reject a childish suggestion that Joel used "appearance" as a poetic vehicle. "Appearance" was necessary for objects which had no physical parallel in 600 BC. The Hebrew *soos* is from a root meaning "to skip" or "leap," also as a swallow for its rapid flight.

#10
like war horses they run
a. Again nonsense: "The speed and orderly advance of a locust army make this an apt simile." Nothing is more disorderly than the advance of a swarm of locusts.
b. Hebrew *pawrash* is from a root that means "a steed," as stretched out to a vehicle, not single nor for mounting. Collectively, it means cavalry.

#11:
As with the rumbling of chariots
a. "Observers have likened the sound (of a swarm of locusts) to 'the falling of rain on a distant forest.'"
b. All modern people are well acquainted with the roar of rocket engines from our many satellite and space shots.

#12:
they leap over the tops of the mountains
a. More nonsense: "Since these locusts approached from the north, to a dweller in Jerusalem the first wave would appear on the tops of the mountains, Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives."
[Hebrew *al* has great variety of application: "above," "among," "out of," "from," "over," "through."]
b. Nuclear missiles leap over the tops of the mountains.

#13:
like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble
a. "As the locusts approach, the sound becomes sharper, like the crackling of blazing stubble, which in Palestine is usually burned off after the harvest."
b. Anyone who has heard the sound of a blazing field of stubble would have no difficulty in drawing the parallel with the roar of rocket engines.

#14:
like a powerful army drawn up for battle
a. "A large locust swarm resembles a powerful army in its regular ranks and coherent regiments." Again, we have more nonsense. Nothing could be more disorderly and incoherent than a large swarm of locusts
b. Could any army be more powerful than a flight of nuclear missiles, directed to their targets?

#15:
Before them peoples are in anguish, all faces grow pale
a. "An observer of the 1928 locust plague in Palestine reports that the effect on the people 'can only be really understood and appreciated by those who have witnessed the terrible spectacle of the all-devastating and relentless advance of immense swarms of young crawling locusts and the spirit of hopelessness and helplessness imbued thereby.'"
b. The reaction of people to the attack of nuclear missiles needs no explanation.

#16:
Like warriors they charge
a. Locusts may charge like warriors.
b. Nuclear missiles do, indeed, charge like warriors of destruction.

#17:
like soldiers they scale the wall
a. "The locusts in dense masses swarmed up the walls of Jerusalem in 1915."
b. Hebrew *awlaw* is a primitive root; "to ascend," "be high" or "mount"; used in a great variety of senses: arise, ascend, climb, leap, lift, mount up, raise, scale, shoot forth, spring (up), stir up. Hebrew *khomaw* is from an unused root apparently meaning "to join"; a wall of protection. The sense need not be a literal wall.

#18:

They march each on his way, they do not swerve from their paths. They do not jostle one another, each marches in his path

a. "Likewise, the locusts approaching Jerusalem in 1915 were compared to 'numberless troops marching on parade.'" Troops on parade are orderly in file and rank. Locusts come in chaotic disorder, with great jostling of one another. They jump erratically from one point to another, with many swerving directions. Again, pure nonsense.

b. Nuclear missiles come in orderly array, without swerving from their programmed paths, each on its own predetermined flight, marching like warriors to total destruction.

#19:

they burst through the weapons and are not halted

a. W. T. Thomson describes vain attempts to check locusts in Lebanon in 1845: 'We dug trenches, and kindled fires, and beat and burned to death heaps upon heaps, but the efforts were fruitless.'"

b. The United States and other nations have attempted to develop anti-missile defenses, but there is no effective method for stopping the march of nuclear missiles in flight. Even with anti-missile forces, many of those abominable weapons will get through to their targets. Man will not be able to defy God's judgment.

#20:

They leap upon the city, they run upon the walls; they climb up into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief

a. "In Jerusalem in 1915 they crawled up the walls of houses, squeezed through cracks of doors or windows and swarmed into the rooms."

b. Nuclear missiles will truly leap upon the cities. Those of us who have watched motion pictures taken of nuclear explosions remember how the brilliant burst of light enters the rooms of the houses, and how the devastation "runs upon the walls" and upon the buildings.

#21:

The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble

a. "These verses give a theological and eschatological interpretation of the locust invasion."

b. When the nuclear explosion are let loose the earth will truly quake and the heavens will surely tremble. That will not be any theological oar eschatological interpretation, but an actual reality.

#22:

The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining

a. "Some elements are drawn from the stock descriptions of the day of the Lord and are here transferred by analogy to the locust plague because it too is a divine visitation and a precursor of that final judgment."

b. The manner in which modern godless scholarship has denied the reality of these descriptions brings appall. These are not stock borrowings from the "day of the Lord." They are true descriptions.

#23:

his host is exceedingly great

a. "That which executes God's word is the locust army."

d. That which brings God's judgment upon mankind are the abominations created by man himself. It will be a just judgment. Man will never be able to bring a complaint against God when he, himself, brings the judgment.

#24:

For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it?

a. "This rhetorical question, expecting the answer, 'No one,' is a fitting close to the foregoing account of the suffering of plants, animals, and people of both country and city."

b. The question is not rhetorical. Who, indeed, among human kind can stand before the face of God's judgment?